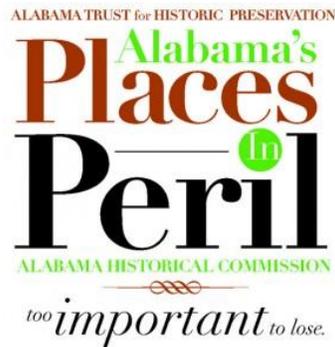


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## **Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation and Alabama Historical Commission announce 2018 Places in Peril**

We are proud to announce that the Places in Peril program facilitated by the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation is entering its 25th year. Over the years the listing has featured bridges, caves, antebellum houses, and other structures that represent the history of Alabama. Places in Peril has elevated many historic places around the state, bringing preservation into the spotlight and showing us how important it is to save Alabama's history.

This year, these places represent the everyday lives of everyday people. They are all public spaces that played a part in the social, religious, economic, and legal lives of Alabamians across the years. Unfortunately, they all now stand threatened by vacancy and disrepair. Each building has its community behind it fighting to bring these buildings back from the brink and put them back into use again as educational and community spaces. Sound planning and a unified community effort can bring these buildings to a certain point, but public awareness can also provide options and resources from across the state.

This year's list includes two churches, an agricultural warehouse and store, a masonic lodge, a county jail, and the ruins of an equalization school (schools built for African Americans across the South after the Supreme Court outlawed segregation).

- Acmar Civic Center, Acmar, St. Clair County
- Ada Hanna School School, Hamilton, Marion County
- Hamburg Building, Foley, Baldwin County
- Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Fruithurst, Cleburne County
- George W. Braxdall Lodge #28, Decatur, Morgan County
- The Old Hale County Jail, Greensboro, Hale County

For more information, please contact [alabamatrust@athp.org](mailto:alabamatrust@athp.org) or call (205) 652-3497.

## ***Acmar Civic Center, Acmar, St. Clair County***

Nominated by the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC), the structure is a gabled-roof building with clapboard siding. It was recently listed to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage for its importance to the African American mining village in Acmar. Built in 1905 by the Acmar mining company, it served as the First Missionary Baptist Church until 1977. Until the 1930s, the building also served, for a time, as the community's Acmar junior high school.

The village of Acmar was associated with two coal mines operated by the Alabama Fuel and Steel Company. The village was entirely segregated, which necessitated the construction of a church and community space for African Americans. While serving as the Baptist church and junior high school, the Acmar Civic Center also held Methodist services every other Sunday. The mining company built a separate school across the street in the 1930s, but the civic center continued as an additional educational space into the 1950s, as well as providing trades education and a space for returning GI's from WWII to finish their education. The building continued to serve the Baptist and Methodist communities until 1977, when the Baptist church moved out. The building continued as a community meeting space for the Acmar Civic League, the Acmar Environmental Preservation Group, and the local masonic lodge.

The building was closed in 1990, but the Acmar Civic League continues its efforts to maintain the structure. The group is now focused on saving the building and recreating the public space that once served the community. Stabilizing the structure is the first step in a plan that involves marking this site as an important historic community space for African American miners in Alabama.

For more information on the Acmar Civic Center please contact:

Hannah Garmon (AHC): 334.230.2644, <mailto:hannah.garmon@ahc.alabama.gov>



**Acmar Civic Center**

## **Ada Hanna School, Hamilton, *Marion County***

Another nomination by the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC), the Ada Hannah School, began as a Rosenwald school that served the African American community of Marion County for several decades. However, after the *Brown v. Board* decision in 1954, the State of Alabama committed itself to maintaining “separate but equal” educational accommodations for both whites and blacks and began a period of school construction not previously seen in Alabama. The schools built between 1954 and 1969, are referred to as “Equalization Schools.” The Ada Hannah School in its equalization form was completed in 1965 as one of two schools built for the African American community. The new school building served Marion County for four years until Alabama integrated its public-school system and the county abandoned the new school.

The school was used as a community recreational facility and later converted into a manufacturing facility for showers and bath tubs. In 1985, the property was purchased by its current owners. Since then, the building has been a victim of several arsons. Now, the building is in poor condition and in need of immediate action to save it. When the current owners purchased the building, they planned to convert it into a community space and senior center. Those plans never came to fruition. However, there is a community that supports the resurrection of the building and would greatly benefit from the reuse of the only remnants of an African American School in Marion County.

For more information on the Ada Hannah School please contact:

Hannah Garmon (AHC): 334.230.2644, <mailto:hannah.garmon@ahc.alabama.gov>

Andra Harbison: 205.915.1967

Linda White (owner): 205.528.1224



**Ada Hanna School**

## **Hamburg Building, Foley, *Baldwin County***

The Hamburg building is nominated by the current owners, the City of Foley. Sometime before 1918 local farmers in Baldwin County formed the Farmers Mutual Cooperative to represent the farms of the area in state and regional markets. The cooperative constructed the multi-functional building as a processor, warehouse, and store front that operated as a feed and seed. It is a frame building with board and batten siding painted red, and a long ell that extends down the length of the railroad tracks. The co-op remained open until 1949 when it shut its doors and was bought by former members, H.M. Hamburg and his sons. The co-op's former members continued to rely on the company. Farmers brought in their crops to be cleaned, graded, packed, sold, and shipped. The proximity to the railroad made Hamburg and Sons an easy shipping point.

The building was an important place for the agricultural community in that part of Baldwin County. Farmers stored their crops there while preparing them for market. Their families relied on the feed and seed for their seasonal farming needs. Hamburg and Sons Inc. operated until 2004, when H.M. Hamburg's grandson retired. Today, the building sits vacant and several ideas for its use are being considered. Ideally, a community effort is the best path to rehabilitation. A local high school has taken on the project of restoring the floors in the building. However, the City of Foley lacks the funding for a full rehabilitation and needs help planning viable uses and prioritizing work.

For more info on the Hamburg and Sons building please contact:

Miriam Boutwell (City of Foley): 251.952.4011, [mboutwell@cityoffoley.org](mailto:mboutwell@cityoffoley.org)



**Hamburg Building**

## **Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Fruithurst, *Cleburne County***

Tucked deep in the woods and hills of the Talladega National Forest is the Shoal Creek Baptist Church. Nominated by the Shoal Creek Church Preservation Society, the church is a gabled log structure on foundation piers. People settled this part of the state in the 1830s and the Shoal Creek area was incorporated in 1866 as a part of Cleburne County. In the 1880s, the Missionary Baptist Church constructed a building near the present site, but it burned and was replaced by the current building. The population of this area declined into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and by 1914 the congregation stopped meeting regularly. However, the building was not abandoned and is used annually for sacred harp singing. It remains a prominent landmark on the Pinhoti National Recreation Trail.

Despite its annual use the building is still threatened. Currently, the floor joists and foundation piers are failing, causing the floor to sag. Unfortunately, the Shoal Creek Preservation Society lacks the knowledge, skills, and funding to undertake a restoration of the foundation and floor. Ideally, the preservation society would receive help, either through financial donations or through donations of time and skill, to make the necessary repairs before issues begin to affect the integrity of the entire structure.

For more information on the Shoal Creek Baptist Church please contact:

L. Alan Jones (Shoal Creek Preservation Society): 256.656.9811, [ramblerhsv@gmail.com](mailto:ramblerhsv@gmail.com)

Les Jones (Shoal Creek Preservation Society): 256.453.6581, [leddjones@centurytel.net](mailto:leddjones@centurytel.net)



**Shoal Creek Baptist Church**

## **George W. Braxdall Lodge #28, Decatur, *Morgan County***

In 1903, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama, the primary group of African American Free Masons in Alabama, granted charter to the George W. Braxdall Lodge, the twenty-eighth lodge in Alabama to receive a charter. That same year the lodge occupied the building at 817 Church St. in Decatur, a space they have utilized for 115 years. The structure is a two-story, stucco over block building with a gabled roof and a balcony supported by three brick columns. Over the years, the membership, and funding levels of the lodge has declined. Because of this, the building has suffered decades of deferred maintenance. Recently, the City of Decatur issued notice to the group requiring these repairs be made or face demolition. The lodge lacks the funding and knowledge to accomplish these repairs and save their historic building. However, they have the organization to succeed with the needed assistance that potentially comes with the recognition afforded by listing to Places in Peril.

For more information about the Braxdall Lodge, please contact:

Winston Engram: 256.445.0087, [uhawl99@gmail.com](mailto:uhawl99@gmail.com)



**George W. Braxdall Lodge #28**

## The Old Hale County Jail, Greensboro, *Hale County*

Located behind the neoclassical, historic Hale County Courthouse, the Old Hale County Jail served Hale County from its completion in 1908 until 1999, when it was replaced by the modern Hale County Corrections facility. The masonry building is distinct with its 24 large windows inset with iron bars, and its crenelated battlements. The jail was constructed during a period of socially conscious prison reform. During the nineteenth century, large convict labor camps were commonplace, but around the turn of the twentieth century prison farms and county and city jails began taking their place. The jail is three stories with offices on the first floor and holding cells on the second and third. The second and third floors were each divided into two separate cells. The jail could hold up to 71 inmates, but on average held 42.

The jail is owned by the Hale County Commission and sits vacant. The primary threat is vacancy and decay, leaving the building to the possibility of demolition. The building is under the purview of the probate judge in Hale County, Arthur Crawford, Jr., a sponsor of the PIP nomination. There are several structural issues that need to be addressed, including a damaged roof. A thorough Historic Structures Report would help to identify key weaknesses in the building's structural elements and consider rehabilitation plans. The building is listed as a contributing building in the Greensboro National Register district. Two private individuals, including Judge Crawford, as well as the Greensboro Area Business and Tourism Association are sponsoring the nomination. This group has the necessary decision-making power and organization to capitalize on the publicity provided by the listing and possibly other opportunities that come from listing.

For more information on the Old Hale County Jail please contact:

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**The Old Hale County Jail**